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ABSTRACT

This report calls for a major change in foreign language education in the state of Utah, moving from an instructional emphasis on the study of grammar to performance in speaking skills that can be sustained through instruction in reading, writing, and structural knowledge. This mastery curriculum will enable students to progress in language learning in a logical sequence from elementary school to junior high school to senior high school without having to go back and start from the beginning each time they move from one level to the next. The rationale behind the curriculum and guidelines for its implementation are presented. The main body of the report outlines the listening, thinking, speaking, reading, writing, accuracy, and cultural awareness skills that must be mastered in the target language at the novice, intermediate, advanced, and superior level. The goals, standards, and objectives of this guide were taken from the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages' "ACTFL Provisional Guidelines," a copy of which is appended. (MDM)

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UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Foreign Language Mastery Curriculum

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January 1989

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The members of the committee who compiled the Foreign Language Mastery Curriculum worked well together. The quality of their thinking is reflected in this document. Their foreign language colleagues, as well as parents, teachers, administrators, and students, should be forever grateful to them for what they accomplished.

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INTRODUCTION

This Foreign Language Mastery Curriculum represents tremendous advancement in foreign language education in Utah. It calls for a major change in instructional emphasis from the study of grammar to performance in speaking skills which will be sustained by the accompanying skills of reading, writing, and knowledge of structure. If the concepts presented in the "Mastery Curriculum" are accepted and applied, they will enable teachers to provide scope and sequence to language instruction from the grade level at which this instruction begins, through the advanced plus and eventually to the superior level. This curriculum will enable students to progress in language learning in a logical sequence from elementary school to junior high school and from junior high school to senior high school without having to go back and start from the beginning each time they move from one level to the next. The same will apply if students go from one school district to another school district; their performance can be measured and recorded.

The goals, standards, and objectives of this guide were taken from the A.C.T.F.L Provision Guidelines, published by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

If you follow the progression of oral proficiency described herein, your students' performance at the various levels can be measured by the ACTFL/ETS Oral Proficiency Interview and all teachers will be able to understand the meaning of the ranking which the student has earned.

The Foreign Language Mastery Curriculum is presented to you as a working model. You are invited to test, revise, and enhance it for the eventual benefit of you and your colleagues. District cooperative effort will be needed to determine what teaching procedures are effective to produce students who can speak with native speakers and be understood.

Oral Proficiency -- THE ORGANIZING PRINCIPLE

The decade of the 1980's is witnessing a nationwide movement to establish oral proficiency as the main goal of foreign language study. Oral proficiency implies the ability to speak and understand human transactions expressed orally. This is usually referred to as face-to-face conversation for conducting all types of interactions such as social conversation, business communication, and instructional procedures.

Until World Ward II, schools and universities generally concentrated on grammar rules and translation as the main objectives in foreign language study, but this resulted in tongue-tied Americans who could not express their needs, thoughts, or desires. Since that time, there has been an increasing awareness of the need for Americans to speak and understand foreign languages proficiently. The establishment of oral proficiency as the major goal of foreign language instruction is pointed out in this mastery curriculum. While the emphasis is on speaking, other aspects of language such as listening, reading, writing, culture, and accuracy are also described to the extent that they contribute to and sustain oral proficiency. The expected or desired outcomes of instruction at the various levels are stated as objectives.

MEASURING ORAL PROFICIENCY

Since oral proficiency has become the major goal, teachers must move towards more reliable and valid measurement of speaking and understanding skills. The traditional achievement tests which evaluate the student's ability to translate or to apply grammar rules in an isolated example do not adequately indicate progress toward proficiency in speaking and listening comprehension. Teachers need to make sure that the tests used will measure speaking performance.

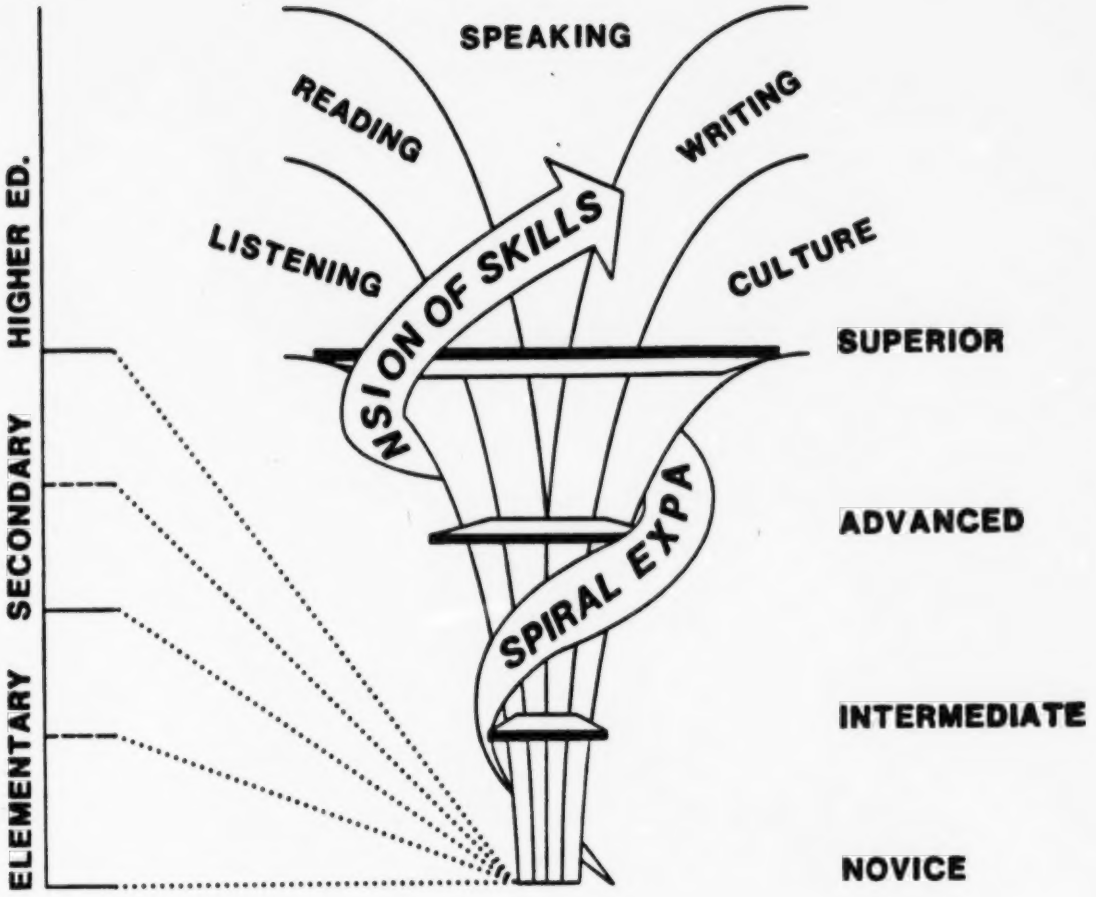
The United States government schools for teaching languages to various federal employees and agents have used a test designed to evaluate oral proficiency since World War II, but until recently this test was simply unsuited for use in the schools. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and the Educational Testing Service (ETS) have collaborated to refine and adapt the government's guidelines of oral proficiency for use in schools and universities. Through a rigorous program, testers are trained to compare samples of speech against the standards which are described in the ETS oral proficiency instrument to determine a rating. The Utah State Office of Education has used these standards to help describe mastery at various levels of language acquisition. It seems highly practical to use the criteria already established to help describe these levels of student progress. Proficiency levels for reading, writing, grammar, and culture have also been described.

The Four Levels of Oral Proficiency

Novice
Intermediate
Advanced
Superior

These levels do not necessarily correspond to any given year or years of language study. Some students will take longer than others to move or progress through the four levels. Students may begin foreign language study in the first grade or they may begin in the seventh, eighth, or tenth grade.

It must be kept in mind that whenever students begin learning a language, they are at the novice level and must progress through each level in sequence as illustrated in the following chart.



The individual student's performance may vary from level to level in differing skills. At any given time, a student may achieve listening skills at intermediate high level with speaking skills at intermediate low level while his writing skills are at novice high and his reading comprehension may be at intermediate high.

HOW TO USE THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE MASTERY CURRICULUM

STEP 1: UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PROFICIENCY AND ACHIEVEMENT TESTING

An achievement test is typically given at the end of a unit, chapter, or course to determine whether or not the student has learned the material presented. A proficiency test is much broader--it is not linked to any specific set of materials. Instead, it attempts to determine what the student can or cannot do with the language in a general sense.

STEP 2: UNDERSTAND THE APPLICATION OF PROFICIENCY TO CURRICULUM

Basing a curriculum on proficiency makes sense, since it helps ensure that students will be able to use the language for real life activities. Proficiency can be described in practical terms and divided into natural developmental levels; therefore, curriculum can be designed to help students acquire usable language ability or proficiency.

STEP 3: RECOGNIZE THE VARIOUS LEVELS OF ORAL PROFICIENCY

The levels of proficiency have been labeled novice, intermediate, advanced, and superior.

STEP 4: REALIZE THAT PROFICIENCY LEVELS REPRESENT NATURAL DEVELOPMENTAL LEVELS

The ACTFL/ETS guidelines are a reflection of normal, natural language development. They describe abilities students acquire as they study a foreign language. They are NOT an attempt to prescribe how language SHOULD develop, but rather a description of how language DOES develop. At the novice level, students are operating with memorized material. There is no real autonomy of language use, nor is there any creating with the language. At the intermediate level, however, students are able to create with the language. Original sentences occur as students acquire the ability to handle most survival needs and limited social demands. At the advanced level, the students demonstrate the ability to narrate and describe in the past, present, and future. At the superior level, students are able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics. They can discuss particular interests and special fields of competence.

STEP 5: STUDY THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STANDARDS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACCURACY

These terms have very specific meanings in the State Foreign Language Mastery Curriculum and are helpful in defining the proficiency levels. A standard is a broad definition of a task; e.g., "ordering food," "giving directions," and "requesting information." The same standards, due to their general nature, can be used to describe tasks at more than one level. The objective is more level specific and defines the bounds of the task. For example, the standard of ordering food at the novice level would be limited by the objective "Order a meal from a simple menu, using memorized phrases." The same standard would appear at the intermediate level with the objective, "Order a meal for a wedding reception from a catering company."

An accuracy statement discloses in general terms the number and kinds of errors that we expect at a given level. For example, an accuracy statement simply lets us know what to expect in terms of grammatical and phonological correctness.

STEP 6: ORGANIZE CURRICULUM AROUND THE SPEAKING PROFICIENCY GUIDELINES

The guidelines serve as the basis for assisting the teacher to guide students through the natural sequence of language development. This avoids the common practice of teaching advanced level grammar to students who are at the novice level and are not prepared for it. It is much more profitable to progress through the intermediate level which allows students to build a more solid foundation needed for developing more complex grammatical principles. Lessons can be devised or text chapters modified to ensure that the natural development is aided rather than circumvented. This allows students and teachers to see the progress and feel success for the tremendous effort applied to teaching and learning a foreign language.

NOVICE LEVEL

DESCRIPTION

Novice students begin without knowledge of the target language. They proceed through emphasis on listening comprehension to use language consisting of one or two words related to elementary needs and courtesy expressions. Students begin to communicate primarily with memorized vocabulary. Through repetition their expressions progress so they develop some flexibility with words and short phrases.

LISTENING/THINKING

STANDARD 1	Students demonstrate understanding of what is heard through appropriate interaction.

OBJECTIVES

1. Understand and respond to basic greetings and courtesy expressions (formal and familiar address).
2. Understand and respond appropriately to classroom commands.
3. Understand terms including gender for common objects in classroom.
4. Understand numbers, colors, shapes, opposites, and the alphabet.
5. Recognize spoken common names of immediate family.
6. Comprehend in context days of the week, months, holidays, and birthdays.
7. Identify the following items: body parts, clothing, weather, home, and food with their accompanying prepositions.
8. Comprehend expressions of emotion, e.g., likes, dislikes, and feelings.
9. Comprehend vocabulary pertaining to nature including plants, animals, and earth.
10. Understand directions and geographical terms related to one's own locale.
11. Understand time and money concepts.
12. Understand questions about a daily routine.
13. Identify the following topics: occupations, hobbies, sports, games, meals, health, and transportation.

NOVICE LEVEL

SPEAKING

STANDARD 1	Students share thoughts and ideas effectively in speech using vocabulary appropriate to age and situation.

OBJECTIVES

1. Use basic courtesy expressions.
2. Pronounce and use terms for common classroom objects.
3. Recognize and answer questions involving the interrogatives who, what, where, how many/much, and when.
4. Practice numbers, colors, shapes, opposites, and alphabet.
5. Pronounce and use common names for family members; e.g., mother, father, sister, and brother.
6. Use days of the week and months in conversation.
7. Pronounce and identify words describing the following items; e.g., body parts, clothing, weather, home, food, and shapes with accompanying prepositions.
8. Express through acquired vocabulary, likes, dislikes, and feelings.
9. Pronounce and use words and short phrases pertaining to nature.
10. Use terms needed for giving directions; e.g., to school, church, and store.
11. Use money and tell time in everyday context.
12. Talk about routine activities and a simple daily schedule.
13. Describe people, places, or things pertaining to the topics--occupations, hobbies, sports, games, meals, health, and transportation.

NOVICE LEVEL

READING

STANDARD 1	Students demonstrate recognition and comprehension of words in isolation and read short phrases.

OBJECTIVES

1. Read and comprehend days and months in target language.
2. Read and comprehend words relating to the following topics: body parts, clothing, weather, home, food, and opposites.
3. Read and comprehend vocabulary having to do with likes, dislikes, and feelings.
4. Read and comprehend vocabulary having to do with nature.
5. Read and comprehend simple descriptive text using familiar vocabulary, e.g., primers.

WRITING

STANDARD 1	Students write simple words and memorized phrases.

OBJECTIVES

1. Label material in target activity.
2. Write short phrases.

ACCURACY

STANDARD 1	Students begin to acquire correct pronunciation and usage of simple points of grammar.

OBJECTIVES

1. Use familiar and formal forms.
2. Use basic commands.
3. Use high frequency verbs in the present tense.
4. Recognize gender (noun articles).

NOVICE LEVEL

5. Recognize interrogative pronouns.
6. Recognize positive and negative usage.
7. Use conjunctions (and, but, or).
8. Recognize and use adjectives and opposites.
9. Use prepositions.
10. Understand and use adverbs such as here, there, etc.
11. Use correct word order.
12. Accurate production of sounds.

CULTURAL AWARENESS

STANDARD 1	Students demonstrate an understanding of cultural concepts related to language being learned.

OBJECTIVES

1. Locate on a world map the country (countries), where language is spoken.
2. Demonstrate appropriate greeting procedures peculiar to the culture (familiar and formal address).
3. Demonstrate and respond to classroom commands and reflect appropriate classroom behavior peculiar to the culture.
4. Use appropriate gestures; e.g., counting with the fingers.
5. Use titles and names of the target culture.
6. Observe diversity between cultures in clothing, weather, homes and furnishings, and food and eating habits.
7. Identify animals and plants specific to target country.
8. Develop an understanding of the influences of the target culture in art, literature, and music.

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

DESCRIPTION

Intermediate level students are distinguished from novice level students by their ability to create and express their own thoughts both in speaking and writing the target language. They are able to read and write simple paragraphs. They read various materials according to their interest and maturity.

LISTENING

STANDARD 1	Students understand short conversations about survival needs and social conventions.

OBJECTIVES

1. Understand numbers (beyond 100, dates and years, cardinal and ordinal).

2. Understand formal introductions, greetings and conversational situations involving varied social graces and courtesies (formal and familiar address).

3. Understand through acquired receptive vocabulary basic survival needs and situations, e.g, meals, house and neighborhood, public lodging, time, simple instructions (route directions), routine commands (customs, police, medical emergencies), banking, shopping, postal service, state of health, and biographical.

STANDARD 2	Students understand main ideas and are able to comprehend the gist of topics beyond survival needs.

OBJECTIVES

1. Students understand extended vocabulary; e.g., foods, table settings, kitchen utensils and facilities, vehicle use and operation, common entertainment (sports, games, hobbies, other leisure time activities), metric measurement (distances, height, weight, quantity, volume), countries and nationalities, monetary units, clothing sizes, weather in detail (individual seasons, aspects thereof, weather reporting), important events and celebrations (birthdays, anniversaries, national, regional, religious holidays), professions and occupations, buildings and structures (as related to professions, shopping, and leisure time activities), occupational tools, and geographical terminology (bodies of water, land features, towns, cities, other political divisions).

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

SPEAKING

STANDARD 1	Students initiate, respond to, and maintain conversations about survival needs and social conventions.

OBJECTIVES

1. Use numbers (beyond 100, decimals, dates and years, cardinals and ordinals).

2. Use formal introductions, greetings, and conversation in situations involving varied social graces and courtesies (formal and informal address).

3. Use acquired active vocabulary to manage basic survival situations, e.g., meals, house and neighborhood, public lodging, time, simple instructions (route directions), transportation, routine commands (customs, police, medical emergencies), banking, shopping, postal service, state of health, and biographical information.

STANDARD 2	Students show increasing spontaneity and flexibility using short utterances and simple sentences.

OBJECTIVE

1. Using extended vocabulary, they identify and describe foods, table settings, kitchen facilities and utensils, vehicle use and operation, common entertainment, countries and nationalities, metric measurements (distances, height, weight, quantity, volume), monetary units, clothing sizes, temperature, weather, seasons, climatic conditions, important events, celebrations, professions, occupations, building and structures, occupational tools, and geographical terminology.

READING

STANDARD 1	Students infer or clarify meaning from the context of short, familiar selections.

OBJECTIVES

1. Read for meaning or nuance.

2. Tolerate some uncertainty.

3. Avoid looking up every word.

4. Use introductory paragraph to predict possible meaning for subsequent paragraphs.

5. Begin to guess meaning from illustrations, headings, and other contextual clues.

WRITING

STANDARD 1	Students write short conversations and/or simple paragraphs about survival needs and social situations.

OBJECTIVES

1. Write cardinal and ordinal numbers in context.

2. Write purposeful communication; e.g., letters, invitations, cartoons, skits, reports, descriptions, and narrations.

3. Write with acquired vocabulary about basic survival situations; e.g., meals, housing, neighborhood, time, transportation, simple instructions (route directions), routine commands (passing through customs, obeying police orders, following medical instructions), banking, shopping, postal service, state of health, and biographical information.

STANDARD 2	Students take simple notes, write summaries, and take dictation on materials dealing with topics beyond survival levels.

OBJECTIVE

1. Take notes, dictation, and write summaries with increasing accuracy on the following topics:

   a. Countries: history, geography, customs, and nationalities.
   b. Simple instructions.
   c. Descriptions: color, sizes, shapes, feelings, opposites, etc.
   d. Common entertainment: sports, games, hobbies, etc.
   e. Weather and seasons.
   f. Important events and celebrations: birthdays, anniversaries, national, regional, and religious holidays.

g. Biographical information.
h. Professions and occupations.

ACCURACY

STANDARD 1	Students are aware of and recognize statements, questions and answers, specific points of grammar, and basic sentence components and construction. They begin to create and express simple sentences using only the highest frequency vocabulary items and grammatical patterns.

OBJECTIVES

1. Recognize, understand, and express with increasing accuracy the present, past, and future tenses as well as the imperative forms of most regular and common irregular verbs.

2. Recognize and correctly use nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and idioms; e.g., gender and number, question words and interrogative forms, possessive adjectives, demonstrative adjectives, subject and object pronouns, most prepositions, most expressions of quantity, and some idiomatic expression.

3. Recognize and use increasingly correct and varied word order.

4. Use a dictionary.

5. Express thoughts on unknown vocabulary via circumlocution.

CULTURE AWARENESS

STANDARD 1	Students have enlarged their awareness of cultural concepts related to the target language through extended listening and reading. They describe cultural concepts through speaking and writing.

OBJECTIVES

1. Locate countries where target language is spoken and describe geography, topography, and climate.

2. Briefly discuss and describe customs; e.g., food preparation and eating habits, lodging (private and public), clothing (current styles and traditional dress), and common entertainment.

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

3. Briefly discuss and describe historical data; e.g., personalities, settings, events, structures (buildings, monuments, statues), and political systems (past and present).

4. Discuss values and beliefs generally accepted and practiced within the culture of the target language.

ADVANCED LEVEL

DESCRIPTION

Students at the advanced level demonstrate growing proficiency in the language skills. They understand and are understood by a native speaker not accustomed to dealing with foreigners. They use the target language for all classroom business and interactions. They begin to speak on the paragraph level to express their thinking and ideas. They can narrate and describe as well as ask questions in routine social situations and in limited work requirements. Speaking skills begin to reflect increasing accuracy with respect to grammar and pronunciation and are augmented and sustained by the development of the reading and writing skills. They read with comprehension most factual information in nontechnical prose and understand some selections on specific topics as related to special interests. They can write routine social correspondence and simple compositions of at least several paragraphs on familiar topics.

LISTENING/SPEAKING

STANDARD 1	Students will be able to initiate, comprehend, and maintain a conversation.

OBJECTIVES

1. Satisfy routine social demands.
2. Satisfy limited school and work requirements.
3. Narrate, describe, and explain in past, present, and future time.
4. Communicate facts: what, who, when, where, and how much.
5. Explain a point of view but cannot yet coherently support an opinion.
6. Talk about topics of current interest; e.g., news, student rules and regulations, personal interests, and leisure-time activities.
7. Understand and discuss autobiographical information.
8. Make comparisons; e.g., life in a city versus life in the country.
9. Make a point forcefully.
10. Communicate needs; e.g., calling for a doctor or a mechanic, or handling the loss of travelers checks or passport.
11. Begin detecting some emotional overtones of the language.

ADVANCED LEVEL

12. Begin making inferences.

13. Makes oral summary of the language heard.

14. Are full partners in conversation not just reactors; can hold up their end of the conversation in face-to-face situations.

15. Discuss other peoples' interests as well as their own.

READING

STANDARD 1	In addition to the reading skills acquired at the novice and intermediate levels, students on the advanced level show sufficient comprehension to understand simple authentic printed material or edited texts within a familiar context. Students can read edited prose on familiar subjects containing description and narration such as news items describing frequently occurring events, simple biographic information, social notices, and standard business letters. In addition, they understand most fictional information in non-technical prose as well as discussions on specific topics related to specific interests.

OBJECTIVES

1. Read edited texts such as prose, fiction, and writings on contemporary culture. The prose is predominantly in familiar sentence patterns.

2. Follow main ideas and some supporting ones in fields of interests or where background exists.

3. Read the facts but cannot draw inferences completely.

4. Read for information and description.

5. Follow sequence of events and react to that information.

6. Read uncomplicated but authentic prose on familiar subjects; e.g., news items, simple biographies, and standard business letters.

7. Begin to guess sensibly at new words by using linguistic context and prior knowledge.

8. Begin to react personally to material but do not yet detect subjective attitudes, values, or judgment in reading materials.

ADVANCED LEVEL

9. Begin reading material and appreciate solely the literary content thereof.

WRITING

STANDARD 1	Students write routine social correspondence and simple compositions of several paragraphs on familiar topics and develop skills to write with some precision and in some detail. They take notes and write accurate summaries. Their writings are understandable to native speakers not accustomed to reading material written by non-natives.

OBJECTIVES

1. Write routine social correspondence and compositions of several paragraphs on familiar topics.
2. Take accurate notes.
3. Write cohesive summaries and resumes.
4. Write short narratives and descriptions on factual and everyday topics.
5. Write about a number of current events or daily situations and express personal preferences and observations in some detail.
6. Write paragraphs that are reasonably unified and coherent.
7. Write about most common topics with some precision and in some detail.
8. Write nontechnical business letters.
9. Describe and narrate personal experiences and explain simple points of view.
10. Write about specific topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence.
11. Write with considerable fluency and ease of expression most of the time.

ADVANCED LEVEL

ACCURACY

STANDARD 1	Students satisfy social demands, most work requirements and communicate on specific topics of particular interest. Students show remarkable ability and ease of understanding.

OBJECTIVES

1. Often show fluency and ease of speech, but language breaks down under pressure.
2. Errors in communication occur occasionally.
3. Accent is intelligible.
4. Handle elementary sentence structure but do not have enough confidence in control of the grammar.
5. Strong in either vocabulary or grammar, but not both.
6. Control vocabulary with some grouping.
7. Can sometimes detect emotional overtones.

STANDARD 2	Students have sufficient comprehension to read simple authentic prose and factual material within a familiar context.

OBJECTIVES

1. Follow sequence of events.
2. Locate and interpret main ideas and details.
3. Read facts but seldom draw inferences.
4. Make intelligent guesses at meanings of new words from context.
5. Read on an objective but not a subjective level.

ADVANCED LEVEL

STANDARD 3	Students write about most common topics with some precision and in some detail.

OBJECTIVES

1. Spelling and punctuation become more accurate.
2. Join simple sentences but cannot write complex sentences.
3. Weaknesses in grammar, vocabulary, and spelling will result in occasional miscommunication.
4. Use dictionary effectively to supply unknown words.
5. Paragraphs are reasonably unified and coherent.

CULTURAL AWARENESS

STANDARD 1	Students become more aware of the many cultural characteristics of the target language countries. They understand various cultural traits of the people in these countries.

OBJECTIVES

1. Demonstrate awareness of common practices: etiquette, taboos, and sensitivities.
2. Make polite requests in the proper settings.
3. Accept and refuse invitations.
4. Offer and receive gifts properly.
5. Apologize appropriately.
6. Make proper introductions.
7. Use telephone correctly.
8. Shop, bargain, and purchase.
9. Understand when teacher speaks.
10. Speak and act in a way as not to offend a native speaker even though a few miscommunications occur.
11. Handle routine business at the post office and the bank.

ADVANCED LEVEL

12. Use the metric system.

13. Order various items such as foods, a hotel room, or a rental car.

14. Become aware of the many different meal schedules and eating procedures.

SUPERIOR LEVEL

DESCRIPTION

The superior level is distinguished from the advanced level in the higher degree of sophistication in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students advance into the realm of making inferences, detecting emotional overtones, hypothesizing, and expressing and defending opinions. Students have broad vocabulary and rarely have to ask for paraphrasing or explanation. They easily understand and speak the standard language.

LISTENING/SPEAKING

STANDARD 1	Students listen, comprehend, and maintain a conversation.

OBJECTIVES

1. Comprehend the essentials of all speech in standard language delivered with normal clarity and speed.
2. Comprehend technical discussions within a special field.
3. Hypothesize and support opinions.
4. Understand spoken language with broad vocabulary rarely requiring further explanation.
5. Follow accurately the essentials of conversations between educated native speakers.
6. Comprehend clear telephone calls, radio broadcasts, and standard news items.
7. Follow accurately oral reports, some oral technical reports, and public addresses on nontechnical subjects.
8. Make inferences from reading selections and conversations.
9. Speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics.
10. Discuss particular interests and special fields of competence with reasonable ease.

SUPERIOR LEVEL

READING

STANDARD 1	In addition to the reading skills acquired at the novice, intermediate, and advanced levels, students interpret hypotheses, support opinions, and make conjectures. Speed of reading increases to at least 220 wpm. Readers gain new knowledge from material on unfamiliar topics in areas of a general nature.

OBJECTIVES

1. Read standard newspaper items addressed to the general reader.
2. Read routine correspondence reports and technical material in a field of interest at a normal rate of speed (at least 220 wpm).
3. Gain new knowledge from material on unfamiliar topics.
4. Interpret and hypothesize supported opinion and conjectures.
5. Read short stories, novels, and other recreational literature accessible to the public.
6. Begin to appreciate nuance and stylistics but still have some difficulty in doing so.

WRITING

STANDARD 1	Students write routine social correspondence and compositions of several paragraphs on general topics with precision and good detail. They write hypotheses, conjectures, and present arguments or points of view accurately. Although sensitive to differences in formal and informal style, students still cannot tailor writing precisely and accurately. Writing research papers and statements of position become part of this level.

OBJECTIVES

1. Write effectively in most formal and informal exchanges on practical, social, and professional topics.
2. Write most types of correspondence such as memos and social and business letters.
3. Write short research papers and statements of position in areas of special interest or in special fields.

SUPERIOR LEVEL

4. Express hypotheses and conjectures.

5. Write arguments or points of view accurately and effectively.

6. Begin to show differences in formal and informal styles of writing.

ACCURACY

STANDARD 1	Students exhibit sufficient comprehension to understand the essentials of standard speech and dialects; they speak with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in formal and informal conversations.

OBJECTIVES

1. Rarely have to ask for paraphrasing.

2. Follow essentials of conversations between educated native speakers.

3. May misunderstand natives who speak quite rapidly or who speak in a dialect or with slang.

4. Detect emotional overtones.

5. Rarely grope for words.

6. Accent may be obviously foreign.

7. Good control of grammar.

8. Errors rarely interfere with communication.

9. Errors seldom disturb native speaker.

STANDARD 2	Students read items addressed to the general public as well as technical items in areas of interest at a normal rate of speed.

OBJECTIVES

1. Vocabulary is broad enough to ensure successful guessing when complex structures and low-frequency idioms create problems.

2. Almost always produce correct interpretation.
3. Read between the lines.
4. Generally unable to appreciate nuances and stylistics.

STANDARD 3	Students write effectively in formal and informal exchanges.

OBJECTIVES

1. Exhibit good control of a full range of structures, spelling, and a wide general vocabulary.
2. Convey messages accurately.
3. Express ideas clearly and coherently.
4. Use dictionary effectively to provide specialized vocabulary.
5. Errors in complex structures are infrequent and rarely disturb natives.
6. Errors in basic structures are sporadic.
7. Still cannot tailor writing precisely and accurately to a variety of audiences or styles.

CULTURAL AWARENESS

STANDARD 1	Students handle almost all social situations, including some with common taboos or some that are otherwise emotionally charged. Students comprehend most nonverbal cues. They discuss ideas relating to foreign and native culture and recognize areas of difference.

OBJECTIVES

1. Participate in almost all social situations.
2. Handle unfamiliar situations with ease and sensitivity.
3. Comprehend most nonverbal responses.

4. Laugh at some culture-related humor, such as imitation of substandard speech, imitation of foreign accents and references to stereotypes within the culture.

5. Understand more colloquial and idiomatic phrases than they actually use.

6. Make use of cultural references and expressions such as colloquial and idiomatic phrases.

7. Generally distinguish between formal and informal registers of speech.

8. Use titles of respect correctly.

9. Understand the role that history, literature, folklore, and music play in the everyday life and attitudes of the people.

10. Become aware of differing attitudes toward religion in various parts of the language-speaking area.

11. Become aware of various social classes and their ramifications.

GOALS FOR THE FLES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT

As stated in the introduction to the Foreign Language Mastery Curriculum, levels of oral proficiency do not necessarily correspond to any given year or years of language study. Some students will take longer than others to move or progress through the four levels. Students may begin foreign language study in the first grade or they may begin in the third or fifth. It must be kept in mind that whenever students begin learning a language, they are at the novice level and must progress through each level in sequence.

Upon completion of five years of FLES study in the elementary school, the average student should be on novice high or intermediate low level in skill areas. These projections are based on students' attending foreign language classes for an average 90 minutes per week. It can be noted here that class time varies in the FLES programs from school to school with the lowest being 60 minutes per week and the highest 150 minutes per week. Proficiency testing is recommended for students leaving elementary school study and entering junior high so that course work will meet their level of achievement.

Foreign language immersion programs offer differing opportunities for the student. After six years of study in an elementary school immersion program, the average student should have reached the advanced level.

YEARS OF F. L. STUDY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS COMPARED TO PROFICIENCY LEVELS

Proficiency is the measure of what one can actually do with the language in a real world setting. While the proficiency statement cannot be translated into traditional measurements of seat time, the following chart provides a suggested comparison between years of F.L. study in secondary schools and proficiency levels. This chart is geared toward the students of average ability. In the same amount of time, some students may progress beyond the designated levels while others may not quite reach these levels. At all levels of education, while effort or attendance contribute to achievement, the ultimate assessment should be based upon proficiency. Ongoing testing needs to reflect the objectives of the standards in this guide. In order to function with a language in a real world setting, students need to be assessed on more than the isolated elements of language normally measured on an achievement test.

END OF YEARS	LISTENING	SPEAKING	READING	WRITING
1	intermediate low	novice mid to high	novice mid	novice high
2	intermediate high	intermediate low	intermediate low	intermediate low
3	advanced	intermediate mid	intermediate high	intermediate mid
4	advanced plus	intermediate high	advanced	intermediate high
5-6	Students should be within the advanced level in all skills			

For description of proficiency levels, refer to ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines Pages in the Appendix.

METHODS OF TEACHING SPEAKING SKILLS

This mastery curriculum for foreign languages places emphasis forcefully on the fact that speaking is the major skill or the foundation of learning a second language. Teachers should concentrate on teaching students to speak the language in everyday face-to-face situations. This is a profound change in what has been the usual pattern of language instruction in the past. Accuracy in form and structure (grammar) should come from language functions not the inverse as has been so widely practiced in the past.

Teachers now ask, "How do you teach speaking skills?" The answer will be provided through experience based on careful thought and experimentation. Teachers will try different methods and share their findings. A few suggestions are offered below:

1. Students learn to speak in a second language when they have to speak the language. (This is not excessively profound, but teachers must keep it in mind.)

2. Most teachers have techniques that "get students talking." They will be invited to share this special information.

3. The use of total physical response appears to meet the needs of students who are at the novice level. It enables them to progress through a silent period, to get meaning from what they see, to learn one or two words at a time, to react physically to demonstrate their comprehension, and to delay speech until they are ready to speak. Students can see, hear, and feel their progress and are, therefore, enthusiastic about learning a second language.

4. Concert recitation used judiciously will enable students to speak words and phrases that will help them progress towards oral proficiency.

5. Teachers must use questions that require their students to think carefully before they respond.

6. Students must be taught how to form questions and how to engage in casual conversation.

7. Teachers must develop oral exercises that enable students to engage in thought processes such as reporting observations, relating events, interpreting, comparing, classifying, generalizing, inferring, analyzing, synthesizing, hypothesizing, predicting, evaluating, and expressing preferences, acceptance, and compliance.

8. A systematic approach:

   Teacher - introduces and explains vocabulary of the dialog or selection.

   Students - in pairs, ask and answer questions about content from dialog. If appropriate, they write vocabulary items in their notebooks.

   Teacher - gives instruction pertaining to the structure of the language previously introduced in dialog.

   Students - in pairs and/or small groups, use the structures in exercises or drills. They write essential elements of structure.

   Teacher - presents and explains a reading or literary selection.

   Students - in pairs, discuss the selection, formulate questions, and give personal reactions to question supplied by the teacher. Students

write single sentence reactions and eventually write summaries and critique of literary selections.

9. Students will role play or simulate situations in which they talk themselves into and out of relatively simple, difficult, or very difficult situations.

10. New techniques, such as the accelerated learning program on the satellite, will make contributions as to how students learn to speak a language.

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

ACTFL has been interested in promoting the notion of proficiency-based foreign language teaching and learning for some time. In 1981 the ACTFL Executive Council targeted language proficiency as one of the organization's priority areas. Grants from the Department of Education have enabled ACTFL to provide training workshops on oral proficiency interviewing and rating, based on techniques endorsed by the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) and modified by ACTFL and Educational Testing Service for academic application. The first workshop was held in early 1982, and participants report having begun incorporating the techniques acquired in the workshop into their teaching.

Evolving in tandem with the work in oral proficiency interviewing and rating is a second project, also funded by the Department of Education, to create proficiency guidelines for the other modalities. Modeled on the rating descriptions used in the oral interview, these guidelines address speaking, listening, reading, writing, and culture. They are designed to guide curriculum and materials development as well as to provide a graduated sequence of learning goals for teachers and students. These guidelines will serve as the basis for future training workshops, funded by National Endowment for the Humanities and Department of Education, in which oral interview training will be coordinated with proficiency-based curriculum design.

There is great potential for the impact of these guidelines on foreign language instruction. Measurable proficiency goals will form the basis for curriculum planning and classroom teaching. Students will more quickly develop a sense of accomplishment and will be able to refer to these "yardsticks" to measure their progress. The complex problem of articulation, the coordination of content between grade and course levels, can also begin to be addressed. Student evaluation and placement can be based on actual language proficiency instead of on inaccurate and relatively uninformative measures of "seat time." It is important to stress that the guidelines are not meant to be a substitute for methodology. On the contrary, they may be used with a range of methodologies, techniques, materials and texts and should, therefore, be more appropriately regarded as an organizing principle or system.

You are encouraged to experiment with these guidelines in your daily teaching and to share them with your colleagues. To aid ACTFL in perfecting these provisional guidelines and in developing proficiency guidelines in additional languages, please review the guidelines and return the inserted questionnaire. ACTFL looks forward to receiving your comments and your suggestions.

ACTFL would like to thank the following educators who worked so diligently to create these guidelines:

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ACTFL PROFICIENCY GUIDELINES

The 1986 proficiency guidelines represent a hierarchy of global characterizations of integrated performance in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Each description is a representative, not an exhaustive, sample of a particular range of ability, and each level subsumes all previous levels, moving from simple to complex in an "all-before-and-more" fashion.

Because these guidelines identify stages of proficiency, as opposed to achievement, they are not intended to measure what an individual has achieved through specific classroom instruction but rather to allow assessment of what an individual can and cannot do, regardless of where, when, or how the language has been learned or acquired; thus, the words "learned" and "acquired" are used in the broadest sense. These guidelines are not based on a particular linguistic theory or pedagogical method, since the guidelines are proficiency-based, as opposed to achievement-based, and are intended to be used for global assessment.

The 1986 guidelines should not be considered the definitive version, since the construction and utilization of language proficiency guidelines is a dynamic, interactive process. The academic sector, like the government sector, will continue to refine and update the criteria periodically to reflect the needs of the users and the advances of the profession. In this vein, ACTFL owes a continuing debt to the creators of the 1982 provisional proficiency guidelines and, of course, to the members of the Interagency Language Roundtable Testing Committee, the creators of the government's Language Skill Level Descriptions.

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Generic Descriptions-Speaking

Novice	The Novice level is characterized by the ability to communicate minimally with learned material.
Novice-Low	Oral production consists of isolated words and perhaps a few high-frequency phrases. Essentially no functional communicative ability.
Novice-Mid	Oral production continues to consist of isolated words and learned phrases within very predictable areas of need, although quantity is increased. Vocabulary is sufficient only for handling simple, elementary needs and expressing basic courtesies. Utterances rarely consist of more than two or three words and show frequent long pauses and repetition of interlocutor's words. Speaker may have some difficulty producing even the simplest utterances. Some Novice-Mid speakers will be understood only with great difficulty.
Novice-High	Able to satisfy partially the requirements of basic communicative exchanges by relying heavily on learned utterances but occasionally expanding these through simple recombinations of their elements. Can ask questions or make statements involving learned material. Shows signs of spontaneity although this falls short of real autonomy of expression. Speech continues to consist of learned utterances rather than of personalized, situationally adapted ones. Vocabulary centers on areas such as basic objects, places, and most common kinship terms. Pronunciation may still be strongly influenced by first language. Errors are frequent and, in spite of repetition, some Novice-High speakers will have difficulty being understood even by sympathetic interlocutors.
Intermediate	The Intermediate level is characterized by the speaker's ability to: —create with the language by combining and recombining learned elements, though primarily in a reactive mode; —initiate, minimally sustain, and close in a simple way basic communicative tasks; and —ask and answer questions.
Intermediate-Low	Able to handle successfully a limited number of interactive, task-oriented and social situations. Can ask and answer questions, initiate and respond to simple statements and maintain face-to-face conversation, although in a highly restricted manner and with much linguistic inaccuracy. Within these limitations, can perform such tasks as introducing self, ordering a meal, asking directions, and making purchases. Vocabulary is adequate to express only the most elementary needs. Strong interference from native language may occur. Misunderstandings frequently arise, but with repetition, the Intermediate-Low speaker can generally be understood by sympathetic interlocutors.
Intermediate-Mid	Able to handle successfully a variety of uncomplicated, basic and communicative tasks and social situations. Can talk simply about self and family members. Can ask and answer questions and participate in simple conversations on topics beyond the most immediate needs; e.g., personal history and leisure time activities. Utterance length increases slightly, but speech may continue to be characterized by frequent long pauses, since the smooth incorporation of even basic conversational strategies is often hindered as the speaker struggles to create appropriate language forms. Pronunciation may continue to be strongly influenced by first language and fluency may still be strained. Although misunderstandings still arise, the Intermediate-Mid speaker can generally be understood by sympathetic interlocutors.
Intermediate-High	Able to handle successfully most uncomplicated communicative tasks and social situations. Can initiate, sustain, and close a general conversation with a number of strategies appropriate to a range of circumstances and topics, but errors are evident. Limited vocabulary still necessitates hesitation and may bring about slightly unexpected circumlocution. There is emerging evidence of connected discourse, particularly for simple narration and/or description. The Intermediate-High speaker can generally by understood even by interlocutors not accustomed to dealing with speakers at this level, but repetition may still be required.
Advanced	The Advanced level is characterized by the speaker's ability to: —converse in a clearly participatory fashion; —initiate, sustain, and bring to closure a wide variety of communicative tasks, including those that require an increased ability to convey meaning with diverse language strategies due to a complication or an unforeseen turn of events; —satisfy the requirements of school and work situations; and —narrate and describe with paragraph-length connected discourse.

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Advanced	Able to satisfy the requirements of everyday situations and routine school and work requirements. Can handle with confidence but not with facility complicated tasks and social situations, such as elaborating, complaining, and apologizing. Can narrate and describe with some details, linking sentences together smoothly. Can communicate facts and talk casually about topics of current public and personal interest, using general vocabulary. Shortcomings can often be smoothed over by communicative strategies, such as pause fillers, stalling devices, and different rates of speech. Circumlocution which arises from vocabulary or syntactic limitations very often is quite successful, though some groping for words may still be evident. The Advanced-level speaker can be understood without difficulty by native interlocutors.
Advanced-Plus	Able to satisfy the requirements of a broad variety of everyday, school, and work situations. Can discuss concrete topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence. There is emerging evidence of ability to support opinions, explain in detail, and hypothesize. The Advanced-Plus speaker often shows a well developed ability to compensate for an imperfect grasp of some forms with confident use of communicative strategies, such as paraphrasing and circumlocution. Differentiated vocabulary and intonation are effectively used to communicate fine shades of meaning. The Advanced-Plus speaker often shows remarkable fluency and ease of speech but under the demands of Superior-level, complex tasks, language may break down or prove inadequate.
Superior	The Superior level is characterized by the speaker's ability to: —participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, professional, and abstract topics; and —support opinions and hypothesize using native-like discourse strategies.
Superior	Able to speak the language with sufficient accuracy to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, professional, and abstract topics. Can discuss special fields of competence and interest with ease. Can support opinions and hypothesize, but may not be able to tailor language to audience or discuss in depth highly abstract or unfamiliar topics. Usually the Superior level speaker is only partially familiar with regional or other dialectical variants. The Superior level speaker commands a wide variety of interactive strategies and shows good awareness of discourse strategies. The latter involves the ability to distinguish main ideas from supporting information through syntactic, lexical and suprasegmental features (pitch, stress, intonation). Sporadic errors may occur, particularly in low-frequency structures and some complex high-frequency structures more common to formal writing, but no patterns of error are evident. Errors do not disturb the native speaker or interfere with communication.

Generic Descriptions–Listening

These guidelines assume that all listening tasks take place in an authentic environment at a normal rate of speech using standard or near-standard norms.

Novice-Low	Understanding is limited to occasional isolated words, such as cognates, borrowed words, and high-frequency social conventions. Essentially no ability to comprehend even short utterances.
Novice-Mid	Able to understand some short, learned utterances, particularly where context strongly supports understanding and speech is clearly audible. Comprehends some words and phrases from simple questions, statements, high-frequency commands and courtesy formulae about topics that refer to basic personal information or the immediate physical setting. The listener requires long pauses for assimilation and periodically requests repetition and/or a slower rate of speech.
Novice-High	Able to understand short, learned utterances and some sentence-length utterances, particularly where context strongly supports understanding and speech is clearly audible. Comprehends words and phrases from simple questions, statements, high-frequency commands and courtesy formulae. May require repetition, rephrasing and/or a slowed rate of speech for comprehension.
Intermediate-Low	Able to understand sentence-length utterances which consist of recombinations of learned elements in a limited number of content areas, particularly if strongly supported by the situational context. Content refers to basic personal background and needs, social conventions and routine tasks, such as getting meals and receiving simple instructions and directions. Listening tasks pertain primarily to spontaneous face-to-face conversations. Understanding is often uneven; repetition and rewording may be necessary. Misunderstandings in both main ideas and details arise frequently.

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Intermediate-Mid	Able to understand sentence-length utterances which consist of recombinations of learned utterances on a variety of topics. Content continues to refer primarily to basic personal background and needs, social conventions and somewhat more complex tasks, such as lodging, transportation, and shopping. Additional content areas include some personal interests and activities, and a greater diversity of instructions and directions. Listening tasks not only pertain to spontaneous face-to-face conversations but also to short routine telephone conversations and some deliberate speech, such as simple announcements and reports over the media. Understanding continues to be uneven.
Intermediate-High	Able to sustain understanding over longer stretches of connected discourse on a number of topics pertaining to different times and places; however, understanding is inconsistent due to failure to grasp main ideas and/or details. Thus, while topics do not differ significantly from those of an Advanced level listener, comprehension is less in quantity and poorer in quality.
Advanced	Able to understand main ideas and most details of connected discourse on a variety of topics beyond the immediacy of the situation. Comprehension may be uneven due to a variety of linguistic and extralinguistic factors, among which topic familiarity is very prominent. These texts frequently involve description and narration in different time frames or aspects, such as present, nonpast, habitual, or imperfective. Texts may include interviews, short lectures on familiar topics, and news items and reports primarily dealing with factual information. Listener is aware of cohesive devices but may not be able to use them to follow the sequence of thought in an oral text.
Advanced-Plus	Able to understand the main ideas of most speech in a standard dialect; however, the listener may not be able to sustain comprehension in extended discourse which is propositionally and linguistically complex. Listener shows an emerging awareness of culturally implied meanings beyond the surface meanings of the text but may fail to grasp sociocultural nuances of the message.
Superior	Able to understand the main ideas of all speech in a standard dialect, including technical discussion in a field of specialization. Can follow the essentials of extended discourse which is propositionally and linguistically complex, as in academic/professional settings, in lectures, speeches, and reports. Listener shows some appreciation of aesthetic norms of target language, of idioms, colloquialisms, and register shifting. Able to make inferences within the cultural framework of the target language. Understanding is aided by an awareness of the underlying organizational structure of the oral text and includes sensitivity for its social and cultural references and its affective overtones. Rarely misunderstands but may not understand excessively rapid, highly colloquial speech or speech that has strong cultural references.
Distinguished	Able to understand all forms and styles of speech pertinent to personal, social and professional needs tailored to different audiences. Shows strong sensitivity to social and cultural references and aesthetic norms by processing language from within the cultural framework. Texts include theater plays, screen productions, editorials, symposia, academic debates, public policy statements, literary readings, and most jokes and puns. May have difficulty with some dialects and slang.

Generic Descriptions–Reading

These guidelines assume all reading texts to be authentic and legible.

Novice-Low	Able occasionally to identify isolated words and/or major phrases when strongly supported by context.
Novice-Mid	Able to recognize the symbols of an alphabetic and/or syllabic writing system and/or a limited number of characters in a system that uses characters. The reader can identify an increasing number of highly contextualized words and/or phrases including cognates and borrowed words, where appropriate. Material understood rarely exceeds a single phrase at a time, and rereading may be required.
Novice-High	Has sufficient control of the writing system to interpret written language in areas of practical need. Where vocabulary has been learned, can read for instructional and directional purposes standardized messages, phrases or expressions, such as some items on menus, schedules, timetables, maps, and signs. At times, but not on a consistent basis, the Novice-High level reader may be able to derive meaning from material at a slightly higher level where context and/or extralinguistic background knowledge are supportive.

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Intermediate-Low	Able to understand main ideas and/or some facts from the simplest connected texts dealing with basic personal and social needs. Such texts are linguistically noncomplex and have a clear underlying internal structure, for example chronological sequencing. They impart basic information about which the reader has to make only minimal suppositions or to which the reader brings personal interest and/or knowledge. Examples include messages with social purposes or information for the widest possible audience, such as public announcements and short, straightforward instructions dealing with public life. Some misunderstandings will occur.
Intermediate-Mid	Able to read consistently with increased understanding simple connected texts dealing with a variety of basic and social needs. Such texts are still linguistically noncomplex and have a clear underlying internal structure. They impart basic information about which the reader has to make minimal suppositions and to which the reader brings personal interest and/or knowledge. Examples may include short, straightforward descriptions of persons, places, and things written for a wide audience.
Intermediate—High	Able to read consistently with full understanding simple connected texts dealing with basic personal and social needs about which the reader has personal interest and/or knowledge. Can get some main ideas and information from texts at the next higher level featuring description and narration. Structural complexity may interfere with comprehension; for example, basic grammatical relations may be misinterpreted and temporal references may rely primarily on lexical items. Has some difficulty with the cohesive factors in discourse, such as matching pronouns with referents. While texts do not differ significantly from those at the Advanced level, comprehension is less consistent. May have to read material several times for understanding.
Advanced	Able to read somewhat longer prose of several paragraphs in length, particularly if presented with a clear underlying structure. The prose is predominantly in familar sentence patterns. Reader gets the main ideas and facts and misses some details. Comprehension derives not only from situational and subject matter knowledge but from increasing control of the language. Texts at this level include descriptions and narrations such as simple short stories, news items, bibliographical information, social notices, personal correspondence, routinized business letters and simple technical material written for the general reader.
Advanced-Plus	Able to follow essential points of written discourse at the Superior level in areas of special interest or knowledge. Able to understand parts of texts which are conceptually abstract and linguistically complex, and/or texts which treat unfamiliar topics and situations, as well as some texts which involve aspects of target-language culture. Able to comprehend the facts to make appropriate inferences. An emerging awareness of the aesthetic properties of language and of its literary styles permits comprehension of a wider variety of texts, including literar[illegible]. Misunderstandings may occur.
Superior	Able to read with almost complete comprehension and at normal speed expository prose on unfamiliar subjects and a variety of literary texts. Reading ability is not dependent on subject matter knowledge, although the reader is not expected to comprehend thoroughly texts which are highly dependent on knowledge of the target culture. Reads easily for pleasure. Superior-level texts feature hypotheses, argumentation and supported opinions and include grammatical patterns and vocabulary ordinarily encountered in academic/professional reading. At this level, due to the control of general vocabulary and structure, the reader is almost always able to match the meanings derived from extralinguistic knowledge with meanings derived from knowledge of the language, allowing for smooth and efficient reading of diverse texts. Occasional misunderstandings may still occur; for example, the reader may experience some difficulty with unusually complex structures and low-frequency idioms. At the Superior level the reader can match strategies, top-down or bottom-up, which are most appropriate to the text. (Top-down strategies rely on real-world knowledge and prediction based on genre and organizational scheme of the text. Bottom-up strategies rely on actual linguistic knowledge.) Material at this level will include a variety of literary texts, editorials, correspondence, general reports and technical material in professional fields. Rereading is rarely necessary, and misreading is rare.
Distinguished	Able to read fluently and accurately most styles and forms of the language pertinent to academic and professional needs. Able to relate inferences in the text to real-world knowledge and understand almost all sociolinguistic and cultural references by processing language from within the cultural framework. Able to understand a writer's use of nuance and subtlety. Can readily follow unpredictable turns of thought and author intent in such materials as sophisticated editorials, specialized journal articles, and literary texts such as novels, plays, poems, as well as in any subject matter area directed to the general reader.

Generic Descriptions-Writing

Novice-Low	Able to form some letters in an alphabetic system. In languages whose writing systems use syllabaries or characters, writer is able to both copy and produce the basic strokes. Can produce romanization of isolated characters, where applicable.

Novice-Mid	Able to copy or transcribe familiar words or phrases and reproduce some from memory. No practical communicative writing skills.
Novice-High	Able to write simple fixed expressions and limited memorized material and some recombinations thereof. Can supply information on simple forms and documents. Can write names, numbers, dates, own nationality, and other simple autobiographical information as well as some short phrases and simple lists. Can write all the symbols in an alpahbetic or syllabic system or 50-100 characters or compounds in a character writing system. Spelling and representation of symbols (letters, syllables, characters) may be partially correct.
Intermediate-Low	Able to meet limited practical writing needs. Can write short messages, postcards, and take down simple notes, such as telephone messages. Can create statements or questions within the scope of limited language experience. Material produced consists of recombinations of learned vocabulary and structures into simple sentences on very familiar topics. Language is inadequate to express in writing anything but elementary needs. Frequent errors in grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and in formation of nonalphabetic symbols, but writing can be understood by natives used to the writing of nonnatives.
Intermediate-Mid	Able to meet a number of practical writing needs. Can write short, simple letters. Content involves personal preferences, daily routine, everyday events, and other topics grounded in personal experience. Can express present time or at least one other time frame or aspect consistently, e.g., nonpast, habitual, imperfective. Evidence of control of the syntax of noncomplex sentences and basic inflectional morphology, such as declensions and conjugation. Writing tends to be a loose collection of sentences or sentence fragments on a given topic and provides little evidence of conscious organization. Can be understood by natives used to the writing of nonnatives.
Intermediate-High	Able to meet most practical writing needs and limited social demands. Can take notes in some detail on familiar topics and respond in writing to personal questions. Can write simple letters, brief synopses and paraphrases, summaries of biographical data, work and school experience. In those languages relying primarily on content words and time expressions to express time, tense, or aspect, some precision is displayed; where tense and/or aspect is expressed through verbal inflection, forms are produced rather consistently, but not always accurately. An ability to describe and narrate in paragraphs is emerging. Rarely uses basic cohesive elements, such as pronominal substitutions or synonyms in written discourse. Writing, though faulty, is generally comprehensible to natives used to the writing of nonnatives.
Advanced	Able to write routine social correspondence and join sentences in simple discourse of at least several paragraphs in length on familiar topics. Can write simple social correspondence, take notes, write cohesive summaries and resumes, as well as narratives and descriptions of a factual nature. Has sufficient writing vocabulary to express self simply with some circumlocution. May still make errors in punctuation, spelling, or the formation of nonalphabetic symbols. Good control of the morphology and the most frequently used syntactic structures, e.g., common word order patterns, coordination, subordination, but makes frequent errors in producing complex sentences. Uses a limited number of cohesive devices, such as pronouns, accurately. Writing may resemble literal translations from the native language, but a sense of organization (rhetorical structure) is emerging. Writing is understandable to natives not used to the writing of nonnatives.
Advanced-Plus	Able to write about a variety of topics with significant precision and in detail. Can write most social and informal business correspondence. Can describe and narrate personal experiences fully but has difficulty supporting points of view in written discourse. Can write about the concrete aspects of topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence. Often shows remarkable fluency and ease of expression, but under time constraints and pressure writing may be inaccurate. Generally strong in either grammar or vocabulary, but not in both. Weakness and unevenness in one of the foregoing or in spelling or character writing formation may result in occasional miscommunication. Some misuse of vocabulary may still be evident. Style may still be obviously foreign.
Superior	Able to express self effectively in most formal and informal writing on practical, social and professional topics. Can write most types of correspondence, such as memos as well as social and business letters, and short research papers and statements of position in areas of special interest or in special fields. Good control of a full range of structures, spelling or nonalphabetic symbol production, and a wide general vocabulary allow the writer to hypothesize and present arguments or points of view accurately and effectively. An underlying organization, such as chronological ordering, logical ordering, cause and effect, comparison, and thematic development is strongly evident, although not thoroughly executed and/or not totally reflecting target language patterns. Although sensitive to differences in formal and informal style, still may not tailor writing precisely to a variety of purposes and/or readers. Errors in writing rarely disturb natives or cause miscommunication.